

December 10, 2023
La Jolla Christian Fellowship
Isaiah's Messiah / S2 Ep2: Light in the Galilee
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Matthew 4:12-17

¹²When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— ¹⁴to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: ¹⁵"Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— ¹⁶the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." ¹⁷From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Isaiah 9:1-2

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future, he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan - ²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

The Setting: Zebulun & Naphtali Vs. 16 *The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*

- Two of the twelve tribes of Israel. Located in the northern part of ancient Israel.
- Known for its strategic location near the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean coast. **"The Way of the Sea"**
- Fertile lands suitable for agriculture. Known for its natural beauty and abundant water sources.
- Wealthy trading hub filled with gentiles (Greeks, Romans, Samaritans, Phoenicians, Syrophenicians, Itureans.)
 - Idol worship was prevalent.
- Part of the northern kingdom of Israel before its conquest by the Assyrians.
 - Threat of attack by foreign nations.

1. **Find your Galilee:** Where are you supposed to be?
2. **Flip your switch:** Be the light.

1. **Find your Galilee: Vs. 12** *When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— ¹⁴to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah.*
 - a. **Jesus made a strategic locational move based on circumstance.**
 - i. **Withdrew:** When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee.
 - b. **Where Jesus went fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy, but also His mission and purpose.**
 - i. Galilee, while not Jesus' ultimate purpose, that would be the cross, but it was a crucial component of His preparation for bringing salvation to the world.
 1. Galilee was on the border of Darkness and Light.
 2. Galilee was within the confines of God's covering.
 3. Galilee was a place where Jesus could be a multiplier of multipliers.
2. **Flip the Switch: Vs. 16** *The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*
 - a. **The Galilee was a land of "Sneaky Darkness"** Darkness didn't just show up one day and say, "Hey, forget about your God. Love me more."
 - i. You can't be a light until you deal with your darkness.
 - b. **Jesus was close to God and near to others: Vs. 17** *From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."*
 - i. The Immanuel life is a life that is nearest to God and near to others. You can't get that backwards and maintain the light.

Discussion Questions

1. How can we, like Jesus, make strategic decisions based on our circumstances to fulfill our mission and purpose? Can you think of a recent situation where such a decision was necessary in your life?
2. In what ways can we prepare ourselves spiritually, similar to how Jesus prepared in Galilee, for the mission or calling that God has for us?
3. How can we address and overcome our personal "darkness" or challenges before becoming a source of light and hope to others?
4. As we discuss living an "Immanuel life" that is close to God and near to others, what practical steps can we take to ensure that our faith is not just a personal experience but also a source of light to those around us?
5. How are you intentionally drawing close to God at the moment?